

Housing and Planning Committee Meeting Transcript – 04/13/2020

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[1:04:11 PM]

>> Casar: Okay. We'll get started then. First let's call roll and make sure everyone's. Headphones and microphones are working. So vice-chair Ellis? Can you hear me okay? >> Ellis: I am present and accounted for. >> Casar: Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I'm here. >> Casar: Councilmember harper-madison. Can you say hi so we can make sure we can hear you? >> Harper-madison: Yes, can you hear me? >> Casar: Yep. You're a little bit muffled. There you go, that's better. Perfect. Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: I'm here. Still alive. [Laughter]. >> Casar: We've got our folks from neighborhood housing here and it sounds like it all works.

[1:05:11 PM]

So we'll call this meeting of the housing and planning committee to order. It's 1:05 P.M. We are virtual for this meeting. I guess I can't say that we're anywhere but all of our houses. We hope everyone is staying safe and we will get started. Our agenda today only includes two items because we don't have any citizens communication in this committee meeting. We hope that folks are watching online or on atxn. Our first item is a briefing and discussion on emergency housing resources for residents impacted by covid-19, housing related to policies and construction-related disaster policies. We know that the city staff have a presentation. We'll let them run through the entire presentation before we ask questions just so that people can go back and check and look at the housing resources they have. Right before the city staff

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start their presentation we want to do a check psa to make sure people are -- have any masks. My friends make these and drop them off. It has watermelons on it. Everybody that you can please do wear a face covering. Councilmember Renteria has got his virgin of Guadalupe face covering to make sure that we take care of other people because the housing emergency, the economic emergency is all tied to the health emergency we are facing. So please do care them whenever you are going to be nearby any people. Staff, please take it away. >> Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Rosie Truelove, director of neighborhood housing and community development. Erica Leak is going to be going through the main presentation that we have. I'm available for questions as is Nefertiti Jackman who is serving as our displacement prevention program manager and then we have a number of other housing staff on the phone should we have some

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questions that come up. Until then I'm going to let Erica take over and go on mute. >> Good afternoon, everyone. Today we'll be summarizing local and federal regulations and assistance related to housing issues for households impacted by COVID-19. If we can go to the third slide we'll start with renter protections that are available. As you all know there are both local, Texas and federal regulations that provide some renter protections at this time, so in terms of city of Austin protections, they require a 60-day notice of proposed

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eviction. They prohibit landlords from locking out tenants or taking out properties of tenants. They ensure utilities will not be shut off and they delay certain eviction processes. So these are obviously done for ensuring that renters are able to stay in place longer if they are impacted by COVID-19. Let's go to slide 4. In terms of federal regulations that are included in the CARES Act, these protections are covered for property use that are either public housing properties or subsidized housing properties as well as any housing that has a federally backed mortgage where they have requested mortgage forbearance. So in these cases eviction processes are delayed for

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120 days or as long as the forbearance lasts. It prohibits charging late fees and penalties and requires 30 days notice to vacate before an eviction may be filed. So going to slide 5, in terms of rental assistance that's available here in the city of Austin, the Austin Housing Finance Corporation is working on some contracts as is Austin Public Health and so I'll go through those quickly. And just so that everyone

watching is aware, there is a website that is austintexas.gov/housing-resources. And that is the best source for people to go to to find information about the rental resources that are

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available. So going to slide 6, the first form of rental assistance that's available that is available now is through Austin public health. That's funded by \$250,000 from Austin -- from the housing trust fund. It serves households up to \$52,000 approximately for a four-person household. People can call 211 for more information about this assistance. If we'll go to slide 7, the next form of rental assistance should be available very soon. The Austin housing finance corporation is finalizing the contract to serve impacts that are impacted by covid-19. It includes up to \$1,500 in one-time assistance and should be available very soon. And again, people can call

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to Austin 211 or visit the website that I mentioned previously. If we go on to slide 8, there are some other entities that are -- many of them are partners with the city who are deploying emergency rental assistance and who the city may partner with additionally to provide more rental assistance. So those are listed on the housing resources website. I won't go through them, but there are a number of entities that do have various forms of rental assistance available. We'll go to slide nine. Another form of rental assistance that's upcoming is a contract for tenant stabilization services that will include rental assistance eviction prevention services such as advocacy and/or legal

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assistance for people at risk of displacement due to evictions or also tenant relocation services. That is intended to households up to approximately 56,000 for a four-person household. Up to 3,000 annually. So we had released the solicitation for that contract earlier before the covid impact had started and it's intended to -- it was intended to be available this summer. We're working with purchasing to see if we can expedite that process as much as we can since it obviously could serve households who are impacted by covid-19. We can go to slide 10 in terms of federal mortgage assistance, there are a number of provisions in the

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cares act that provide some protection for both people who have federally backed mortgages, including forbearance for one to four-unit housing, and there's also more closure -- there's also foreclosure moratorium. We'll go to slide 11. For elements that have five or more units of housing, there is forbearance for federally backed mortgages, a moratorium on tenant eviction filings for 120 days and notice to vacate and also heightened renter protections for the duration of the forbearance. Going to slide 12, in terms of um financial assistance related to the cares act, the city of Austin will be

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receiving approximately 4.6 million in additional community development block grants funds. And that could potentially be used for emergency rental assistance, potentially tenants rights assistance, childcare or her activities that are eligible activities under the community development block grants. And we've already started having conversations with economic development, Austin public health, intergovernmental relations office and finance to think through the best way to be able to deploy those funds as quickly as possible. We'll also be deploying an online resource to communicate to the public about the cares act requirements and funding availability. There will be a cares act portion of the city's recovery web page and that

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will be available soon. On slide 13, the cares act also provides funding for emergency solutions grants and the city of Austin will be receiving approximately 2.3 million for -- through that funding. That can largely be used for temporary shelters to prevent, prepare for and respond to the coronavirus. And then there are some other specifics that go along with that funding. Slide 14 which is the funding that the city will receive through the housing opportunities for persons with AIDS program. The city will be receiving approximately 272,000 through that additional funding, which can pay for

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assistance for rent, mortgage or utilities to prevent homelessness and has some other provisions that go along with that. Slide 15 is just acknowledging the action that city council took last week to approve the relief in a state of emergency funding of 15 million and obviously one of the potential activities to be funded through that program is for mortgage assistance. So we will continue to partner with other apartments to determine how neighborhood housing can work with other departments and help deploy those funds. We've also included in this presentation on slides 16 and 17 the federal poverty levels as well as the hud income limits to show what

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incomes people could have to be able to be served by the various programs that I've mentioned. And then we are able to answer any questions that you have. >> Casar: Great, thank you. I really appreciate the presentation. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Did you say me, Greg? >> Casar: Yes, I did. >> Kitchen: Okay. I have a couple of questions. Thank you very much. This is a very nice way to see all these programs. I so appreciate that. So I had a couple of questions. I am curious about the rental [indiscernible]. I can see the various eligibility levels. I'm wondering how for the emergency assistance, how do

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they consider income? In other words, for some folks the bottom moved dropped out for them because they've lost their jobs. But if you look -- so if you look at last year's it may not give a full picture of what's happening with them. So can you speak to that? >> Absolutely. So we have been certainly thinking about that and one of the screening criteria that will be included in most of these contracts is looking at how people's situations have changed and if they've lost income, how much income they've lost. It's one of the reasons that the contracts we're finalizing goes up to 120% of median family income because we realize that there are households who had

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two people working full-time jobs that might have been paying decent wages, but if the people who had those jobs lost them that would be a significant reduction in income. So we are trying to set up the contracts in such a way that we do -- we are able to recognize that they may have lost a significant amount of income recently and want to make sure that those folks are eligible as well. >> Kitchen: I have other questions, but would you like to go back to others first? >> Casar: Yes, let's do a quick lap here. Right before I call on councilmember harper-madison, mayor, welcome. I saw that he just signed in. If everybody could stay muted except for one person it really helps people

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listening in. Councilmember harper-madison harper-madison. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, chair and thank you for this presentation. This is going to be helpful in sharing information with our constituents. I do have a question about the population who I think we may be inadvertently overlooking and it's extraordinarily important that we sooner rather than later figure out what resources we have available for them. So recently incarcerated or recently released, formerly incarcerated people, I want to find out

whether or not this cdbg funding would that apply for providing emergency housing and/or support services for folks who are being prematurely released without having had the opportunity to put things in place because of the covid-19.

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>> This is Erica again. So depending on how we write those contracts [audio interference]. >> Somebody needs to mute their microphone, please. >> Harper-madison: Guys, there's some interference. Okay. >> How does that sound now? >> Harper-madison: Much better, thank you. >> Great. So depending on how we write the contracts for those -- for that funding, I don't think that that should be a barrier. Rosie is raising her hand. >> I don't know the appropriate way to unmute and to talk. I was just going to add that we just got the guidance on how the cdbg dollars can be spent this morning, so we're trying to unpack that and figure out how is the best way to implement those

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dollars and. And I've made note of this as an area of particular need to see how we can facilitate assistance to those individuals, so we're very much at the beginning process of figuring out what we're going to do with the cdbg covid dollars and we'll note this. Thank you. >> Harper-madison: Is that information that you're permitted to share with our office. Maybe we can all put our heads together at the same time to figure out the best way to move forward with the application of the support. >> Sure. I'm happy to share the very hud speak version of what we got and then we're working to translate that into English so I'll be happy to share that too. >> Harper-madison: Okay. Thank you, Rosie, thank you, Erica. >> Casar: Other questions from folks? Councilmember kitchen, back to you. >> I -- >> Kitchen: I have a question about rapid

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re-housing or phs funds. Those are funds to address homelessness, the kinds of funds, particularly the rapid re-housing funds. So in any of these, any of these rental assistance programs is there rapid re-housing funds? >> So this is Rosie. I think we were having some issues earlier with the call-in line being active, but I think that akeisha with the health department who manages these rapid re-housing contracts, akeisha, are you in on the call? >> Good afternoon. This is akeisha Johnson from the office of public health. >> Keisha, can you answer the councilmember's question there? >> I'm sorry, repeat your question? >> Kitchen: My question just was what about rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing funds, the funds that help with

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both rental costs or rental assistance and social services. I'm wondering whether any of these programs also allow for that type of cost or if we should be looking to something else for that? >> >> Since I just was able to get into the call, you're comparing this to what type of costs, I'm sorry? >> Kitchen: Well, we've been talking about the different sources of dollars to help with rental assistance with various parts of the community. So some of them are federal dollars, some of them are the programs that we created. So my question is is rapid rehousing because I -- re-housing because I think of that as rental assistance available to prevent people from becoming homeless, people at risk or actually to help people homeless right now.

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So my question is are any of those pots of money available for rapid re-housing or are we looking at other funding? In other words, how are we increasing our level of funds that are available for rapid re-housing? >> So some of that will be available with the additional esg, emergency solutions grant dollars, that we're receiving, which if I'm recalling is about 2.7 million. I could be off on that. So that's initially some source of funds that can be used and that will be administered through our office through contracts that Keisha has. We have not yet made a determination on how those contracts will be increased or how those dollars will be put forward, but it is something that we're working on. Then occasionally as we look at ways that the cdbg dollars can be used, we have opportunities with some of the waivers that have been

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granted for cdbg. Specifically they've waived the 15% of the public services grant, which keeps us from spending more than 15% on services. So there is the potential for some of those dollars to go toward more supportive services type models than we've seen in the past with community development block grants. Again, that's what we're looking at as we try to figure out what the need is, the highest need right now. And how we can most readily deploy those dollars? Did that help, councilmember? >> Kitchen: When we're talking about assistance, it has the same function really as rapid re-housing in a way, except that for folks that are already homeless I'm wanting to make sure that we have a route for improving or increasing our rapid re-housing. So I'll be happy to talk

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with you guys more about that offline. And the rest of the rental assistance programs should be helpful for people to help prevent homelessness because that's the whole idea behind the rental assistance programs. >> Hello. This is bill [indiscernible] With aph. I wanted to chime in on that. For the rapid re-housing the 2.3 million additional funding I believe is coming in. We have programs existing with front steps, with the communicable disease units and also with downtown Houston community court to do homelessness assistance, which is for people who have already begun homelessness. Those can be expanded with these dollars and also we wanted to create additional programs under those agencies or different agencies for homelessness prevention assistance, which is helping people who might become homeless for the esg funds and that's also an option for us. >> Kitchen: Okay. And who was that speaking?

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>> Neil Hackett with Austin public health. >> Kitchen: Great. I'd love to have a further conversation about that. I want to make sure that the dollars that are specified specifically for homelessness are pretty small for our city given the whole range of services that are needed. And so I'm just wanting to follow up with that. I have one more question. Oh, I see that councilmember harper-madison has a question. I'll defer to her. >> Casar: Okay, councilmember. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, councilmember kitchen. Actually, I'm going to follow up with where you were going there and ask a question. I saw an announcement today that the Salvation Army downtown shelter is closed as a result of concerns around covid-19 exposure N which case speaking of rapid re-housing and emergency housing assistance, I wonder if people being abruptly

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displaced from shelters are eligible to be included in this -- what did you call it, Neil, esg funds? >> Yes. The emergency solutions grant funding for rapid re-housing programs. If they are in a shelter, then yes, they would qualify for rapid re-housing dollars. EsG has its own special requirements or most likely they wouldn't meet those as what hud calls category 1 or category 4 homeless. It would be a question of getting them into those programs. >> Harper-madison: Would you mind elaborating there when you say getting them into those programs. Is it lengthy? Does it require assistance? It sounded to me like it might be a barrier getting them into those programs. Can you give me a clearer picture of that? >> We have rapid re-housing program funding through general fund dollars and then we have the esg rapid

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re-housing funding that is more focused on clients staying at the arch or front steps and also clients going through downtown Austin community court and who have through the communicable disease

unit if they're hiv-positive they qualify for that esg program. But there are limitations on who goes into the esg programs, but with the additional funding I believe we would be able to set up different rapid re-housing programs under different agencies if we needed to or expand who gets to go into esg rapid re-housing versus just our regular general fund rapid re-housing. >> Harper-madison: Okay. So my staff and I will be in touch just to get some clarifiers there and follow up and see -- and -- yeah. I wouldn't belabor it here. We'll be in touch with you. And then the other question I had was for tenant

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relocation, is that applicable for people in mobile home communities? >> For people in mobile homes. >> Harper-madison: Yeah. I think this might be a question for Rosie and/or Erica. >> So yes. The the contract for stabilization services is intended to be used for people who are relocated from mobile home parks where they're being displaced, yes. >> And if I might, there was -- I wanted to speak to your question earlier, councilmember harper-madison, about the Salvation Army closing. I just texted vela Carmen and the folks that were at the Salvation Army have been moved to either the icization facility or the protective lodging facilities. So those folks have been temporarily housed at one of the hotels that we have leased right now.

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>> Harper-madison: Excellent. That's good to know. I appreciate it. The other population of people that I'm concerned about by way of shelter displacement are those in the DV shelters, but I'm assuming that the same level of consideration would be taken for them as well. >> Yes, I would assume so. We have that hotel space that's available and folks are getting moved expeditiously. >> Harper-madison: Excellent. I appreciate you. >> Casar: I've got a couple of questions and clarifications to make. I think it was really good for you guys to put up 211 as a resource for people to call if they -- if they have housing needs and need to get access to resources. The slide after the 101 slide with the non-profits, charities, health and human services department. Can people get connected to all of those by calling 211 or should they call 211 and

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then also go to the list of resources you have on the next slide? >> That is a great question. I'm not sure if I know. >> Casar: It looks like Ms. Jackman might know. She's raising her hand. >> Can you hear me? >> Casar: We can hear you now. >> Great. So all of those resources they have been provided to 211 and we are updating the list if anything changes. But right now that's the main place that people can call so we're routing resources and updating that list on a regular basis. So people should either call 10-1 or go

to the web page that y'all are maintaining as far as resources. 211. We'll keep sharing that link. >> Yes.
>> Casar: So people don't have to call each of the non-profits. They can just call 211.

[1:35:04 PM]

>> Absolutely. >> Casar: As far as tenant protections that you have listed, are we at a place that we know that 311 is adequately responding to% people if someone gets a notice to vacate or hasner issue that might be violating one of the local ordinances or one of the federal laws that y'all listed? Is the goal at least to get there? >> Erica, do you want to respond? >> I'm not sure that I have the information there. If Erica or nefertiti does, that's great. If not, -- I think the goal is to get them there, but I'm not sure if they're there yet. So I'm not sure if Erica or nefertiti can confirm. >> I have not heard confirmation that they're there yet. >> So we have -- I'm sorry, I would like to add -- >> Please go ahead.
>> Okay, I'm sorry.

[1:36:04 PM]

>> We have been in communication with 311 as well. We are in the process. I met with Erica or spoke with Erica and Julie, our communications manager this past week. And then I followed up with someone who is outlining clear steps in terms of what tenants can do to respond if they are threatened or with an eviction innovation so we discussed that as well this morning. And that information will also be shared with 311. And our communications team, we've been going back and forth to make sure they have accurate information as well. >> Casar: Good. Because I think there are lots of people with questions, people want to know where to call. So once you get 311 ready that would be good. And obviously a lot of tenants are going to know how their landlord financed their property and what kind

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of mortgage they have, so those tenants just calling in and us navigating through the complicated process will be helpful. To make it really clear on the slides that you have about forbearance, on one to four unit housing it sounds like you can ask for up to a year of forbearance if you have a federally backed mortgage, which I think is a really large share of that part of the market. And then it also says foreclosure moratorium for 60 days except for vacant properties. Is that foreclosure moratorium that applies to anyone with a federally back mortgage that's one to four unit housing, is that right? Or do we know if it's just one to four unit housing? >> I'm fairly certain it would be for federally backed mortgages. >> Which again I think is about the majority [inaudible]. >> Casar: Then on federal mortgage assistance, that's

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five or more unit housing, 90 days for federally backed mortgages and then you have a 30-day push back on notices to vacate until after July 10th? Can you explain that more so that we understand. Are you saying you can ask for a forbearance? >> Yeah. Is Trish link on the phone? >> I am, but I actually need to see the powerpoint because I am not sure which -- what language you're talking about. >> Casar: On the five or more unit housing slide, which is slide 11.

[1:39:18 PM]

So we already know on the previous slide what the roles are for five or more housing. It sounds like if you have a federally backed mortgage you can ask for 90 days and the third is that the landlords cannot ask them to vacate in less than 30 days until July 10th. So that means you have 30 days from a notice to vacate to be evicted and no those rules apply until July 10th. Am I reading that right? Is that the way to read it? >> Councilmember, I actually need to pull up the act quickly if you guys want to table this question while I find an answer for you. I can do that quickly. >> Casar: That sounds good. My last question was, what sorts of properties are covered by the violence against women act in the 30 day moratorium on evictions.

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I'm not sure which properties are covered anyway. >> So I think we'll need to check on that one as well. >> Casar: Sounds good. Is that sounds good. Are there other questions from others for these folks? We had things about construction safety that we were going to bring up at the end. Vice-chair Ellis? >> >> Ellis: I apologize for dropping in and out. I've had more technical activities today than any other meeting. I did have a question about the forbearance on federally backed mortgages. Even though there is still forbearance, people are still expected after that window is over to come up with the full amount or is there a grace period for those who may have trouble paying a mortgage at this time to ease them back into regular payments later?

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Can someone explain a little bit more about that? >> Were people able to hear that? >> Was that not clear? >> Well, I heard the question, but then I'm not sure if it was Trish or someone else. But forbearance in general is an agreement between the lender and borrower to delay a foreclosure so I don't know the specifics of this and maybe Trish can weigh in on it, but from what I have been hearing, it sounds like people who have the mortgages need to work with the people they have

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borrowed from. And it may be that different banks might be willing to come to different agreements, but I'd love to get Trish's additional thoughts on that. I think there are the minimum protections that are allowed by the cares act which allows, you know, kind of the delay of foreclosure, but then I think the question is whether there may be some banks who are willing to work with the people who have the mortgage loans to come up with different payment plans. And from what I have been hearing that seems like a definite possibility, but I imagine it's not consistent from one bank to another. >> Ellis: Was someone on the line that was going to help explain that? I'm sorry, I can't tell who was on the call.

[1:43:22 PM]

>> So Trish link from the law department is I think looking at the previous questions. So we may -- let's add that to her list and see if we can come back to that when we get to the rest of the questions. >> Ellis: Okay. I think that could be really helpful because I know we're here to talk about housing, but also in commercial spaces where people are having problems with paying rent. I know there's a lot of landlords that would extend more grace to their tenants if they know that they will have a little bit of leniency from the bank. So it would be good for us to have a clear picture of if anyone -- if any certain companies and banks are locally offering this or saying this is our plan so that people out in the community have a better idea of where they might get a little more leniency on their mortgages so that the people who are renting from them -- we're all in this together. I know that a lot of people are trying to give each other that opportunity to make the payments come back together, but it's going to

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be really hard for a lot of people on all sides of this for quite awhile. >> Understood. And I think since the cares act won't speak to the specifics of different banks, it may be hard for staff to get a good picture of that as we continue to work with other departments on the recovery and figure out what various tools and resources are available for small businesses, etcetera, that may be information that we could add to that website B it does sound like the type of information that you're looking for is probably not something that we know offhand since it probably does differ from one lending entity to another one.

[1:45:27 PM]

We do have an answer, councilmember Casar, on your questions about violence against women act so that includes low income housing, tax credit properties, home funded properties, esg funded properties, section 811 and 2002 section 8, section 211. It sounds like it's a lot of federally funded programs that are included in the violence against women act. >> Casar: That makes sense to me. I got it. >> This is Trish link with the law department. And for the question about the notice to vacate, what

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the cares act states is that they cannot -- they have to give a 30-day notice before requiring them to vacate. And then -- they have to give them a 30-day notice to vacate. And/or but, I should say, they can't even issue the notice to vacate until their forbearance expires. So if the property owner gets the forbearance, then they cannot issue any notices to vacate until after that expires. >> Casar: And what does

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the July 10th date modify? >> I think the July 10th date is probably a calculation of [indiscernible], which at the moment I'm not sure of. >> Casar: That's okay. Okay. And then councilmember Ellis had a question. It's clear that forbearance means somebody can't have their property foreclosed upon for -- for example, a year, and a larger housing for example three months and it means you have that foreclosure protection, but her question was how do -- is it written anywhere how those payment plans are supposed to work D it mean the payments are pushed back or that you have to pay some more upfront at the end of that? Is there any information that we have on that.

[1:48:33 PM]

Or might it just be a [indiscernible]. >> The act from what I can tell so far does not -- did not set up those specifics. Basically they -- the law allows for an oral or written request for forbearance from a multi-family borrower. The servicer is obligated to document it to provide for up to 30 days of forbearance and then to extend it. And then-- as far as I can tell so far, that is the extent of what guidance the federal legislation gives. >> Casar: I'm sure some people with requested that so I'm sure if anyone is watching they will know the process and how it's going out there.

[1:49:34 PM]

So there were other questions from councilmember harper-madison? Councilmember kitchen?
Councilmember kitchen, why don't you start up. >> Harper-madison: I'm sorry, what was that? >>
Kitchen: Should I go ahead? >> Casar: Go ahead, councilmember kitchen. >> Harper-madison:, I saw you had a question and -- councilmember harper-madison, I saw you had a question and you can ask as soon as councilmember kitchen is finished. >> Kitchen: My question is just I'm wondering if there's -- if the website could contain some kind of chart or list of the different programs for rental assistance? It's just a thought. It appears to me that people could think that there's some overlap amongst the programs and there appears to be some overlap. So this is a tool to help people figure out what they should apply for and I'm wondering if that could be done, if it would be useful? >> Hi, this is Rosie. We will look at whether or

[1:50:36 PM]

not we can summarize something in a clean and user friendly way. >> Kitchen: I'm just thinking because there's overlap in the eligibility requirements so it might not be clear for people to know what they should try first. >> Casar: Is it generally the case, and tell me if this is wrong, that people apply for rental assistance, they don't necessarily apply for the funding bucket and providers figure out which funding is right for you? >> I would want to -- I don't know if nefertiti is on the line and she can respond to that. I think some programs are operating somewhat independently of each other so we would want to make sure that folks are applying for the right one or the one that's most successful for them. Nefertiti, I see you're unmuted. >> Yes. There are programs -- we don't have one centralized location where people can apply for rental assistance because the programs are

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operated independently from community-based organizations and other people that we have contracts with that's why one of the things we have sought to do is provide a range of of options and resources that are available to 211 and they all have different requirements. There are some specifically for homeless and those experiencing homelessness. There are some that go up to 120% mfi, some for 60 percent and under. So each program -- and this is on -- this has been based on what these organizations, the target communities that these organizations have been serving. So they are all slight different and they have different eligibility requirements. >> Casar: Someone could call into 211 and they would route you to the organization most likely

[1:52:39 PM]

suited so that an individual would have to go and read the program requirements [indiscernible]. >> Right. And one of the things we're seeking to do, we want to mangle sure we keep the information up to

date because what we have found is depending on who receives a call at 211 you can get entirely different information and we want to make sure that people are getting accurate information and consistent information. So we're also trying to make sure that we streamline that process so everyone is getting the same information or at least based upon the information that they share with the 211 representative. >> Thank you for your help in that. Anything else, councilmember kitchen? >> Harper-madison: Councilmember harper-madison, did you still have a question? >> Harper-madison: I never had a question. I was confused when you said that. Am I twitchy, did I do something that looked like I raised my hand.

[1:53:39 PM]

>> Casar: It looked like you were raising your hand, but I could have been wrong. >> Harper-madison: I might have been dancing. Sorry about that. I'll keep my hands lower. >> Casar: That sounds good. Keep the dancing off screen. [Laughter]. Any other question for the staff on this? So something else we were also posted for had to do with construction and housing construction under emergency ordinance and the mayor's emergency order. That has changed pretty constantly and constantly since we started discussing what would be on the agenda. I know that the latest is that the governor has his order which currently has the city in the position where the city is considering construction essential and therefore not forcing that construction to close. There are safety rules that the mayor has put into place and so if people are

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interested I could screen share those construction safety rules if that's of interest. I know the mayor is on and off and out of this committee and I don't know if he has anything to say about that. Let's see if director [indiscernible] Has one? >> I was going to say that I believe Denise Lucas, the medical services directser, is on the phone if there are any questions and she could be helpful in answering them. >> Casar: That sounds good. We might ask her those questions. And I also see the mayor back here. Would it be people to also quickly scan through what the safety requirements are or do people want to ask questions? What do participant want people want to do? How do people feel about taking a few minutes to pull the requirements on to screenshot so people can say? >> Kitchen: I think that's a good idea, Greg. >> Mayor Adler: And if there's a quick question I

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can answer, I have a 2:00 conference call. >> Casar: The 2:00 conference call will be right now. It will probably take me at least a minute to figure out how to screen share. I don't know if there's anything you want to say about that. >> Mayor Adler: There were construction people that met with staff last

week. I think they continued to meet on Saturday. We're going to extend the orders today and the judge for her today. I'm not sure the judge is going to include any language about construction, opting instead to wait and come up with a guidance that just addresses construction in the days after today. I would anticipate my order would have some construction guidance, similar to what was circulated last week in

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the industry and on Friday with some comments and provisions. That's kind of a placeholder pending the broader conversations that might have a more elaborate or complete guidance. I wanted something in the order today so as not to leave it silent. >> Casar: Sorry, I realized I was muted. Can you see the construction guidance on my screen? Is that coming up for you? So just so that you all can see what the mayor has ordered and it sounds like

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he's going to update that with the updated order is you can see what's currently required in the city. Is that all construction sites with 10 workers at any time need to post in languages understood by all persons working there a notice that shows the sizes and types of shift crews and how they'll limit those crews to all working at the same time. It needs to be a prescreening of the health of each worker, understood by each worker. Ensuring that we have hand washing station with soap and sanitizing for every 15 workers. Prohibiting the use of community water coolers. Making showers that tools are disinfected between people. Making sure that there's a signposted in English and Spanish about the social distancing requirements. Making sure if everyone is confirmed to have contracted the virus that that person needs to be sent home and the city needs to know so

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that we can do the contract tracing and other safety steps we need to take. There needs to be a list of every worker who comes on to the job site everyday. That way we can have a good record-keeping of who is on the sites. And there's some strong encouragements for not claiming unemployment or choosing not to work because they believe in good faith that there's a health risk and not taking adverse action against workers who choose to quarantine themselves. That is currently the [indiscernible]. Are there questions about that? I >> Renteria: Sure, I want to make a comment, and I'm glad we're taking steps like we discussed last week on requirements, to make sure that employees are

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well-educated on this issue. I have a personal friend that she contacted the virus, and she was texting about three weeks ago that she was very afraid that her husband was a worker on the -- on a construction site, and they weren't offering any kind of protection of any sort, so -- and she did -- ended up testing positive, so it's very important that we make these employers know how severe and important this requirement is so that we can prevent the outbreak and save some of these families from the agony of being afraid. It's just heart breaking to hear people come and tell me these stories about how afraid they are with their husband working on a construction site. >> Casar: Thank you, councilmember, and if anyone --

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you know, when people have to drive somewhere, if they see a violation at a construction site or any other violation of the mayor's orders, people can call 311 or, you know, when you're not driving and you can have access to the 311 app, people can submit pictures and complaints that way, be that construction or anything else where they aren't seeing people following the rules of the -- following the rules. It's important for us to track that so we can make sure the rules are being followed. Any other questions? Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Can you also speak to anything related to smaller -- is there guidance for, like, residential construction or repair and remodel in someone's home where it's actually a small

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number of workers, or does this -- because I think I saw that this applies to larger sites. Right? Ten or more? >> Casar: That's right. The mayor's orders currently applies to ten or more. I've urged that a lot of these things should be able to be done by smaller construction sites because many of those smaller sites are required to post signs and are required to have places for workers to be able to go to the bathroom and wash their hands already. So I hope and think that we should be able to potentially start getting to a place where they have those stricter requirements for smaller sites. On small sites just like all workplaces, the general orders still apply, but I think we might have to leave it to somebody on staff, and I don't know if Denise is still on, to sort of describe what the current rules are on smaller sites. I've urged for as many of the things we've just listed here to apply to small sites as well as to those medium and large sites.

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>> So Denise is on the phone. Denise, can you speak to the questions on small sites? >> Yep, I can. This is Denise Lucas, director of development services. Can everyone hear me? >> Casar: We can. Thank you. >> Okay. Good. So what we've done, we have over 6,000 subscribers to our list serve, and the rules are the same whether it's a large construction site or small construction site in that we are insisting that they all use good, healthy work habits on the site. So face covering, it doesn't matter if it's a large construction or a small, it still should be required, along with washing faults so workers can continually work their hands. Requirements are the same for making sure they wear gloves, as well as if they share tools, this they clean their tools in between the sharing to help prevent even more of the spreading of the disease. So when we send out

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communications to our stakeholders, it's both residential and commercial, and we have all of the construction organizations as part of that, and they are part of our education process. So they've done a great job of helping us good get the word out to even the smaller sites. And then for the smaller construction teams, we've partnered with three of the minority trade associations in Austin, Texas so we have hispanic, the African American, and the Asian, trade unions, who are actually providing them with assistance to help them do educational materials in their language for their workers so their workers also understand what their rights are, on the construction sites, that they need to be safe as well and what the expectations are regarding following the order from the mayor. >> Casar: Councilmember Ellis? >> Ellis: I have a quick question on that. Do we have a good understanding of how many of the construction sites feel confident about their level of being able to provide

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masks and gloves for workers? Or has there been a request for assistance? And I'm thinking specifically about our community resource coordination cabinet that a couple of us are on. And obviously, ppe for health care workers and first responders, our highest priority, but I'm wondering if there's a little more community outreach that we can possibly help with to make sure that people who are able to participate in the construction trade have the equipment necessary to protect their health as well. Has there been -- been any request for assistance there? >> We have not personally received request for assistance but I think that's an excellent recommendation for us to reach out and find out if there is an adequate enough supply for all the construction workers to be protected. >> Ellis: Why. Yeah. I think that could be really helpful. I know when I wanted to talk about construction-related practices, the rules were different. I think we definitely want to

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keep workers' health and safety our highest priority. I know that there are a few things like remodels or small things that are happening with some residential projects where you can do it in, you know, two or four people could be on a site where they could be properly spaced out. It's going to help provide income for people, as long as we're watching for their health and safety too. So if I can be of service in trying to get the word out to construction teams that there might be some assistance, or to try to navigate that communication, just let me know what you're hearing. I'm happy to help. >> Thank you so much. >> Casar: Anything else on this item? I think what we saw from the university of Texas study that the mayor described is that given the size of the construction workforce, at least 50,000 people, that it is a significant risk to the social distancing in the city to have so many people

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working, especially a lot of folks that are in multigenerational households, a lot of people who work with their hands who might have to sometimes car pool together. So if they're going to be working, given governor's order, these rules become all the more important, so the more we can communicate these to our constituents, the more we can make that clear, direct people to 311, because in the times -- every once in a while I take a quick drive to pick up something and drive by construction sites, I'll often see, unfortunately, that these rules aren't all being followed yet, and so we really need to get these rules to be adopted. And, so please, let's all do our part to get these to happen. All right. Anything else? Our other item -- were you going to say something? >> I was just going to say to talk about future meeting, and it sounds like you're on it. >> Yeah. So our other item today is to

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talk about future meetings. I don't know if there has been a council committee meeting, virtual, before this one. I think we were the first. I think we did okay. Thank you guys for figuring it out together with me. I think what we could also do, just be in touch with the -- be in touch with the committee about how often we want to meet over the covid-19 crisis but I think we get so many questions about people's housing, this was helpful, but I'm happy to hear what other councilmembers think. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I think it would be helpful at future meetings to talk about recovery, and so how we're going to move -- for me, related to recovery is how we're going to move into greater stabilization, in other words. I don't know if that's the right term, but for me, recovery includes ways in which we can do better than we were before in terms of addressing people's

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vulnerabilities. So I think that that would be a good discussion for this committee to have at the right time. >> Casar: I think that makes a lot of sense. Councilmember harper-madison, were you going to say

something? Or do I just keep thinking you youwant toes something? >> Harper-madison: I think I realize what's happening. I think when I go to do this, it looks like I'm flagging you down so I'll put it down. Yeah, I didn't have any questions. Thank you. >> Casar: Great. No, that's right, I think that we'll time a meeting at a time where we don't have, you know, an oncoming council meeting, and I do think that, yes, figuring out how it is in this moment, given there being a lot of vacant units, there being maybe more things on the market, how are we creating more opportunities for more affordable housing, how, once these eviction and

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foreclosure moratoriums start closing, how do we make sure we don't have a wave of foreclosure and eviction, and how we set up a moratorium long-term, and resilience long-term. I think this has been a huge stress on the system and if people weren't already living paycheck to paycheck and already having so much trouble paying for their housing, this would still be a really bad situation but would not have been nearly as horrible. So thank you for raising that up. >> I just wanted to add that as we get further along with our plans for and how we're going to deploy cdbg, then we'll be in touch, and if it makes sense to have a committee meeting, then we'll be reaching out to you, Mr. Chair. >> Casar: And we'll figure out which pieces of this the whole council wants to know about versus what things should be handled in committee. But I do think that once we start

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deploring some of these multi-million-dollar programs into the community, we want to be able to make sure the council and community know how we did it. >> Yeah, and we did want to not lose site of the need to get public input on some aspects of that, as we then have to make some quick changes to our consolidated plan or to our action plan. So if there's a role for the committee to play, we'll be including the committee on that. >> Casar: Yeah. As far as those federal requirements or other requirements or public input, maybe that should be the place where we take some testimony for the council. Councilmember harper-madison, I think you actually were raising your hand this time. >> Harper-madison: This time I was. >> Casar: I would feel really goofy if that time you weren't. >> Harper-madison: No, I was. I appreciate councilmember kitchen saying the part about recovery. I definitely wholeheartedly agree in all the things that you listed under there, and there are definitely going to be distinctly some opportunities for us moving forward, with the vacancies, including it's -- there's going

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to be long-term housing and I'm looking forward to tapping into how we can get some affordability out of it. I wanted to ask a couple things. One with the meetings, I hope that we have the opportunity to be

very flexible. This thing is not rigid, it's moving so quickly that I think offering ourselves the opportunity to meet as needed is really going to be important. I also was curious to see how we can make certain that this committee and the cabinet that affects housing specifically, various cabinets that affect housing specifically can be certain to be working and aligned with one another. That was all. >> Casar: That makes sense to me, and I think on the staff side, y'all are able to sort of float between the cabinets in ways that we aren't, so make sure we aren't duplicating each other's work, that would be really good. Okay. Does that cover it? Anybody got any last comments? Stay safe, everyone.

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And with that, we'll adjourn the meeting at 2:13 P.M. >> Thank you. >> Casar: Thank you guys.